

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-13

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INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 VO-01 /048 R

DRAFTED BY EA/K:PWKRIEBEL:DPW

APPROVED BY EA- MR. INGERSOLL

EA/K:DLRANARD

EA:RLSNEIDER

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R 302230Z MAY 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 113771

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR VISA

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL CALLED IN AMBASSADOR HAHM MAY 29 TO STATE CONCERN OVER REPORTED ROK DECISION TO WITHDRAW VISA OF CSM CORRESPONDENT POND. COUNTRY DIRECTOR RANARD AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR KIM TAE ZHEE WERE PRESENT.

2. INGERSOLL MADE CLEAR REPORTED ACTION WAS DISQUIETING AND THAT HE CONSIDERED IT CONTRARY TO THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES. HE EMPHASIZED US COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND THOUGHT THAT THIS ACTION WOULD EXACERBATE ROK PROBLEMS WITH THE US PRESS, NOT SOLVE THEM. HE REMINDED HAHM THAT HE HAD KNOWN MOST OF CORRESPONDENTS WHO COVER KOREA WHILE IN TOKYO, THAT THEY WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT EVENTS IN KOREA AND THAT THE ROKG SIMPLY COULD NOT EXPECT THESE EVENTS TO PRODUCE FAVORABLE US PRESS REPORTING. HE REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT WITHDRAWAL OF THE VISA WOULD FURTHER DAMAGE THE ROKG'S IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES AND  
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WITH THE US CONGRESS WITH NO COMMENSURATE GAIN FOR KOREA.

3. HAHM ACKNOWLEDGED THE VALIDITY OF INGERSOLL'S COMMENTS, INDICATED HE HAD HIS OWN DOUBTS ABOUT ROK ACTION, BUT STATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO RISK THIS UNFAVORABLE REACTION IN LIGHT OF WHAT HE TERMED THE UNWARRANTED LINKING OF PRESIDENT PARK WITH COMMUNISM AND JAPANESE

MILITARISM. HE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER US CONCEPTS OF PRESS FREEDOM APPLIED TO OTHER COUNTRIES AND WHETHER THE AMERICAN PRESS WAS FREE TO DO AS IT PLEASED WITH SMALL COUNTRIES AND WEAK GOVERNMENTS BECAUSE OF THEIR FEAR OF US REACTION.

3. HAHM THEN WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM BOSTON (HE HAD COME TO THE DEPARTMENT DIRECTLY FROM THE AIRPORT) WHERE HE HAD MET WITH CSM MANAGEMENT. HE DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS AMICABLE AND SAID THE CSM DESIRED TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION. HAHM WAS TOLD POND WAS SCHEDULED FOR TRANSFER TO MOSCOW THIS AUGUST. CSM WAS PREPARED TO PRINT LETTER FROM HAHM APPARENTLY QUESTIONING POND'S REPORTING, ALONG WITH AN EDITORIAL COMMENT DISCLAIMING ANY CSM INTENTION OF ACCUSING PARK OF BEING A COMMUNIST. IN LIGHT OF THIS MEETING HAHM THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PERSUADE ROKG TO SUSPEND ACTION ON VISA UNTIL AFTER POND DEPARTURE. HAHM SAID CSM HAD AGREED NOT TO MAKE VISA QUESTION PUBLIC UNTIL HE HEARS RESULT OF HIS RECOMMENDATION. IN MEANTIME CSM WILL CABLE POND NOT TO GO TO KOREA BUT WILL NOT GIVE EXPLANATION. (HAHM DID NOT THINK POND HAS YET BEEN INFORMED OF ROK DECISION ON VISA.)

4. INGERSOLL AND RANARD THOUGHT CSM MEETING HAD BEEN SENSIBLE AND PRODUCTIVE. LOOKING TO FUTURE, RANARD SUGGESTED THAT HAHM'S DISCUSSION WITH CSM WAS BETTER WAY OF COPING WITH UNFAVORABLE PRESS REPORTING RATHER THAN DENIAL OF VISA. HAHM HOPED ROKG WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO HIS RECOMMENDATION; AND ASKED FOR US EMBASSY REENFORCEMENT OF HIS RECOMMENDATION.

5. ACTION REQUESTED. SUGGEST YOU INFORM FONMIN OF OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SITUATION AS SET FORTH IN PARA 3 ABOVE  
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AND OUR VIEW THAT RECOMMENDATION BY HAHM APPEARS TO BE REASONABLE WAY OF DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM AND AVOIDING A PRESS SQUABBLE WHICH CAN ONLY FURTHER HARM ROK IMAGE. BROWN

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ShawDG  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**To:** SEOUL  
**Type:** TE  
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